

I have long believed that environmental protection goes hand-in-hand with our nation's energy security and economic prosperity. The key to achieving this balance is passing commonsense reforms to our environmental and energy policies that respect both the needs of people and the environment. Unfortunately, I believe our current policies are substantially out of balance.

Affordable and reliable energy supplies are the backbone of our economy, and indeed, our very way of life. But fluctuating fuel and electricity prices place a severe financial burden on Northern California's families, farms, and small businesses. While variability in energy prices is to be expected in a global marketplace, we can take meaningful steps today to ensure that America has an affordable and secure energy supply. I believe Congress should encourage responsible exploration of our abundant domestic supplies, including in a small section of the frozen "ANWR" tundra in Alaska, our vast offshore reserves, and through recoverable oil shale in Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming. In total, these domestic supplies amount to an energy source that could power the United States for over 130 years at current consumption levels. Unfortunately, the Obama Administration and some members in Congress continue to oppose these efforts. It is also imperative we pursue a balanced, 'all-of-the-above' energy policy. I have long supported tax incentives for the production of renewable sources of energy such as wind, solar, biomass, hydroelectricity, and geothermal.

Meanwhile, our nation's environmental laws have regrettably failed to fulfill their missions while having a detrimental impact on our communities. At least one of these laws -- the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 -- has achieved a mere 1 percent success rate. Ninety-nine percent of species on the ESA list have not recovered to healthy populations. Too often we've seen instances in Northern California where the ESA has defied commonsense and put community health and safety at risk. For example, the infamous listing of the northern spotted owl decimated our once vibrant timber industry, and the presence of habitat for the protected Valley Longhorn Elderberry Beetle led to years-long delays in necessary improvements to the Arboga Levee in Yuba County and the tragic loss of three lives when the levee was breached. Other examples of this law's negative impacts are the devastating 2001 irrigation shutoff in the Klamath Basin in the far northern part of our Northern California congressional district, and the threat of a similar disaster at the Red Bluff Diversion Dam that has required the construction of a pumping plant to allow for continued irrigation deliveries.

Simply put, environmental protection and economic prosperity need not be mutually-exclusive goals. I will continue to fight in Congress to undo the detrimental imbalance in our energy and environmental policies and enact reforms that allow for responsible and commonsense use of our abundant natural resources.

[Click here to read about my latest actions on this issue.](#)

[ [go back to "On the Issues" main page](#) ]